

REMARKS

Claims 1-18 are currently pending in this application.

Claim Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 1-8, 11-15 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawata (U.S. Patent No. 5,274,777) in view of Phillips (U.S. Patent No. 5,867,601). In the prior Office Action herein, the independent claims were not rejected based on these references, and therefore, as stated in the prior Amendment, since these claims depended directly or indirectly from independent claims, it was submitted that they were patentable in view of the patentability of the independent claims. In the present Office Action, the independent claims were rejected for the first time based on Kawata and Phillips, and this rejection is addressed below.

Kawata discloses a digital data processor executing a conditional instruction in a single machine cycle. A six step multiple instruction sorting process for sorting two pieces of data by magnitude of the data is described (column 1, lines 30-68). Also, a four step multiple cycle instructions sorting sub-instruction pipeline processing operation is described (column 4, line 14-column 5, line 58). The pipeline process is stated to sort two pieces of data previously performed by four instructions, to be completed in two sorting sub-instructions, for high speed operation.

Phillips discloses a processor for converting a video signal from frequency domain signals into spatial domain signals. Transposed values are separated into odd and even processing paths, and converted in parallel, to produce fixed values by performing a one-dimensional transform.

In contrast to Kawata and Phillips, the claimed invention includes basic blocks, each of which includes a first stage including basic cells and a second stage including basic cells, or two-stage parallel basic cells, wherein the number of basic cells in the first stage of the basic block is greater than the number of basic cells in the second stage of the basic block, or larger by one. Also, in contrast to Kawata and Phillips, the claimed invention includes a total number of basic cells which is equal to the number of combinations of pieces of input data to be compared, not the sorting of two pieces of data by two sorting sub-instructions as in Kawata.

Claims 9-10 and 16-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kawata in view of Phillips and Lewis et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,775,667). Since these claims depend directly or indirectly from independent claims, it is submitted that they are patentable in view of the patentability of the independent claims as set forth above.

Dependent Claims

In view of the patentability of the underlying amended independent claims, it is submitted that the amended claims depending therefrom are likewise patentable.

CONCLUSION

In light of the above amendments and remarks, applicant submits that the application is in condition for allowance, and requests that it be passed to issue. If there are any issues which can be discussed in a telephone interview, the Examiner is requested to contact applicant's attorney at (310) 242-2732.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any required fee relating to this response to our Deposit Account No. 06-2425.

Respectfully submitted,

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